

the

HARBINGER

open minds open hearts

VOLUME LXXIII | JANUARY 3, 2021 | No. 34

From the Pews, Caroline Clark

Beginnings come from unexpected places. In January 2020, I certainly didn't expect that the beginnings of 2021 would look like this. Like the world after the creation, a new year dawns full of possibility. We look forward to January 1st as a fresh start. We make resolutions of many stripes (I resolve to eat less dessert while my daughters resolve to eat more).

Yet this year starkly demonstrates how the new year differs significantly from the story told in Genesis, when God created the earth, life, and finally human existence from nothing. Unlike that beginning, we humans bring much baggage with us when we travel between December 31 and January 1, showing how arbitrary the New Year divide really is. We have the makings of a fresh start with the thankful arrival of the Covid vaccine, but we can't forget those who have suffered, and continue to suffer, loss of life, health, and economic security. We can resolve to start fresh and tackle our society's problems, but not without understanding the roots of those problems that lie in the past. I can resolve to give up dessert, but my body will unfortunately still bring the baggage of sugar cravings into the new year. I could go on and on with examples, but it's depressingly clear that we humans don't get to wake up with a clean slate on the morning of January 1st. There's a reason why January is named after the Roman god Janus. Janus had two faces – one looking forward but one looking back.

Yet let us not be completely pessimistic and give up our efforts. The new year offers an opportunity not to create, but to begin anew. It allows us to strive for perfection but with the knowledge that God grants us grace if we fall short, as we will. Hopefully as we think about what we want to accomplish in 2021 and beyond, we can take with us a few lessons from 2020:

- We have not always prioritized the right things.
- Our actions have not always aligned with our values.
- We have not always confessed our wrongdoings.
- We learned that we cannot control our world as much as we thought we could.

As we move towards the longer days of Spring and see more light than darkness, let us strive to turn toward the light and bring that light to as many family members, friends, neighbors, and fellow humans as possible. But as we do so, let us remember the past, remember 2020, and let us remember the examples of God bringing light out of calamity just as God created light from nothing. It's fair to say we are living in a weary world. One whose problems seem to be growing by the day. My hope is that you are reminded of the words of "Oh Holy Night". I hope you remember God appeared in flesh and that the soul felt his worth. And more than ever, I hope this weary world will rejoice in the blessings of God's covenant to each of us.

Happy New Year.

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Sunday, January 3, 2021 | On Demand on Facebook & YouTube | 9a & 11:15a wpc-online.org



Second Sunday after Christmas Day

Preparation for **Worship**

“What would it mean for Christians to give up that little piece
of the American Dream that says, “You are limitless”?

Everything is not possible. The mighty kingdom of God is not yet here.

What if ‘rich’ did not have to mean ‘wealthy,’ and ‘whole’ did not have to mean ‘healed’?

What if being the people of “the gospel” meant that we are simply people with good news?

God is here. We are loved. It is enough.”

Kate Bowler,

Everything Happens for a Reason and Other Lies I’ve Loved

Gathering and Preparing for **God’s Word**

Prelude

“Gesu Bambino”

Yon

Welcome and Announcements

Leader: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.

Call to Worship

All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God:

Jesus, Son of the living God, splendor of the Father, Light eternal;

Jesus, King of glory, Sun of righteousness, born of the Virgin Mary;

Jesus, Wonderful Counselor, mighty God, everlasting Lord;

Jesus, Prince of Peace, Shepherd of souls, perfect in holiness;

Jesus, Friend of all, Protector of the poor, Treasure of the faithful;

Jesus, inexhaustible Wisdom, our Way, our Truth, and our Life;

Jesus, a Word spoken, a dream incarnate, Emmanuel, God-with-us:

the coming of your light into our world brightens our weary hearts with peace.

Hymn

“Joy to the World”

Antioch

Prayer of Confession and Assurance of Pardon

**God of grace and truth,
in Jesus Christ you came among us as light shining in darkness,
a Word of hope to a weary world.
We confess that we have not welcomed the light
or trusted good news to be good.
We have closed our eyes to glory in our midst,
expecting little, hoping for less.
We have relied on our strength,
ignoring your wisdom for worldly wiles,
preferring our saccharine speech to your eternal Word.**

**Forgive our doubt, and renew our hope,
so that we may receive the fullness of your grace,
and trust finally in your incarnation.
Transform our lives until we finally proclaim
the good news we have received,
and live as disciples illumined by the light. Amen.**

The Sacrament of Baptism

Michael Quinn Doar

Presentation

Questions to the Parents

Question to the Congregation

Thanksgiving over the Water

Baptism

Prayer

HEARING GOD'S WORD

Prayer for Illumination

Old Testament Lesson, *Genesis 1:1-5; 31*

Gospel Lesson, *John 1:1-14*

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Homily "A Word made Flesh is seldom And Tremblingly partook"

Anthem "The Work of Christmas"

Forrest

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Affirmation of Faith, *The Apostles' Creed*

**I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell;
the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.**
**I believe in the Holy Ghost;
the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints;
the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body;
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.**
**Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts
as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**
**For thine is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory forever. Amen.**

Hymn	"Walk in the Light"	Elderkin
Charge and Benediction		
Postlude	"Swiss Noel"	Daquin

LEADING WORSHIP THIS EVENING

Leigh Stuckey, *preaching*

Lauren Slingerland, *liturgist*

Emily Busby, *sponsor*

Ryan Hall, *lay reader*

Nancy Smith, *organist*

Katie Knauer, Diana Dailey, Hunter Ditsch, Mark Kemp, *vocalists*

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Join Us in Welcoming

BAPTISM

This morning we welcome into our fellowship Michael Quinn Doar, son of Chris & Lauren Doar.

OPEN MINDS •Education @WPC

WESTMINSTER BOOK CLUB

The Westminster Book Club will meet Tuesday, January 5 at 7pm. Verify location or type of meeting with Ellen Stevenson (ellens7377@gmail.com). Susan McLeod will lead our discussion of The Housekeeper and the Professor by Yoko Ogawa and Stephen Snyder. Please join us! New attendees are always welcome.

GIVING HEARTS •

Financial Update @WPC

2021 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

As of Monday, December 28, we have received \$2,154,769 in pledges toward our 2021 budget goal of \$2,513,715.

For your convenience, you may pledge via our website at wpc-online.org/pledge-today, you may mail in your pledge, or send your pledge by email to the Church Financial Secretary, Sherri Owens, at sherri@wpc-online.org.

The Work of Christmas Begins

Howard Thurman

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:

To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among brothers,
To make music from the heart.

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 3 - 9, 2021

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS DAY

No Sunday Morning Zoom Bible Study

9:00 a.m. Online Worship Service

11:15 a.m. Online Worship Service

TUESDAY

12:00 p.m. Administrative Committee

Zoom Meeting

7:00 p.m. Westminster Book Club

Jennifer Dillard
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